

John Cheevers Book 1744
Ex Dono Reverendi Patris
A N

EPISTLE

Consolatory to the

Honourable and Pious

COUNTESSES

OF

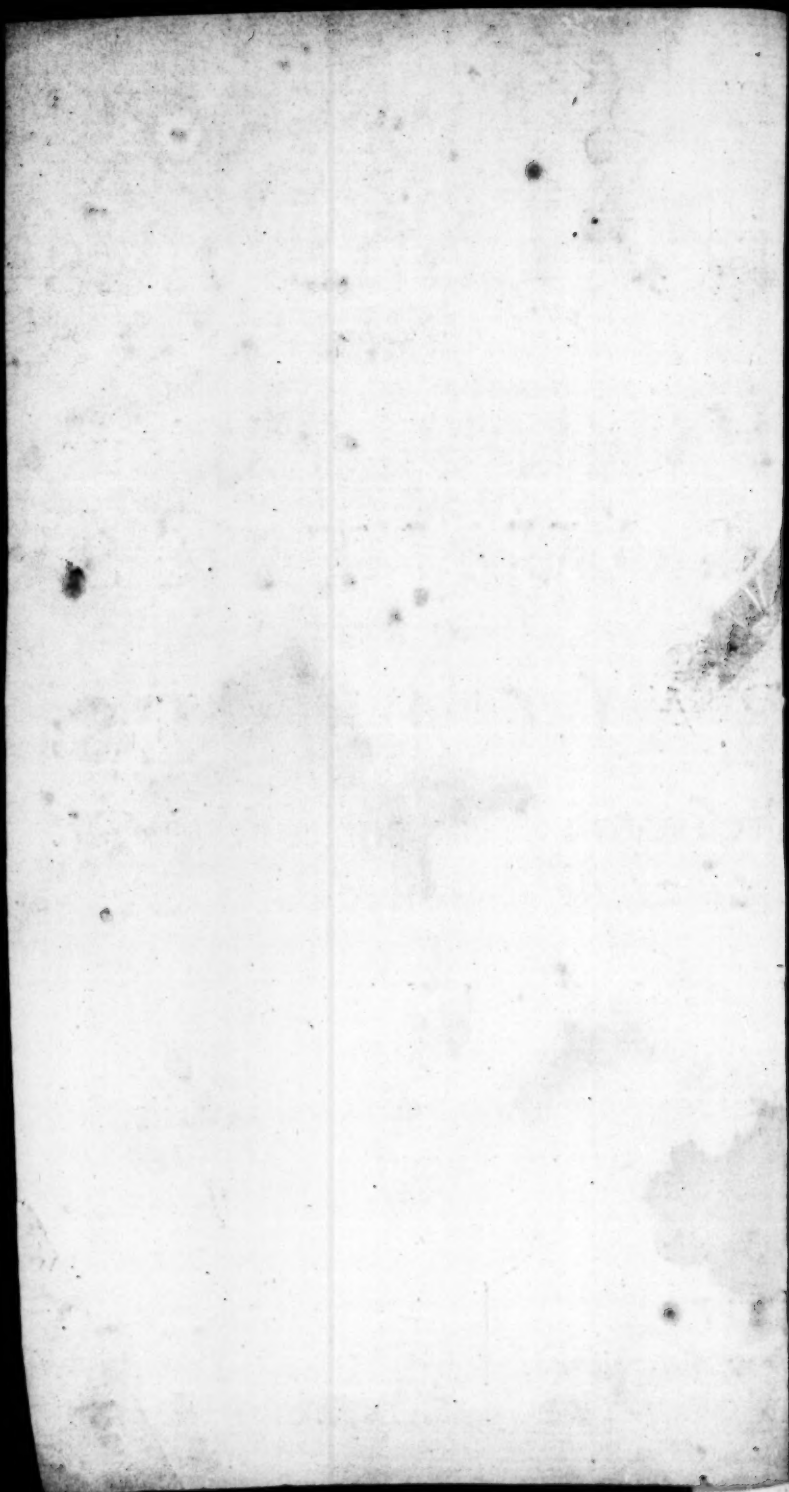
BALCARRES;

Prefixt to a Book, entitul'd *the Divine Life*, in Three Parts, &c.

- Of the Knowledge of God.
- . Of Walking with God.
- I. Of Converſing with God in Solitude.

By the late Reverend Mr. *Richard Baxter*.

Now Re-printed, for the Use of all Persons,
whose Cases it may be ſuitable to: A. D. 1717.



T O T H E
 RIGHT HONOURABLE
 And Exemplary Lady
 ANN COUNTESS
 O F
 BALCARRES.

MADAM,

IN hope of the fuller Pardon of my Delay, I now present you with two other Treatises besides the Sermon (enlarged) which at your Desire I preached at your Departure hence. I knew of many and great Afflictions, which you had undergone in the Removal of your dearest Friends, which made this Subject seem so suitable and seasonable to you at that time: But I knew not that God was about to make so great an Addition to your Tryals in the same kind, by taking to himself *

the Principal Branch of your Noble Family, (by a rare Disease; The Emblem of the mortal Malady now reigning.) I

** Charles Earl of Balcarres who dyed of a Stone in his Heart, of a very strange Magnitude.*

hope this Loss also shall promote your Gain, by keeping you nearer to your Heavenly Lord, who is so jealous of your Affections, and resolved to have them entirely to himself: And then you will still find, that you *are not alone*, nor deprived of your dearest or most necessary Friend, while the Father, the Son, the Sanctifying and Comforting Spirit is with you. And it should not be hard to reconcile us to the Disposals of so sure a Friend. Nothing but Good can come from

God ; however the blind may miscal it, who know no Good or Evil, but what is measured by the private Standard of their selfish Interest, and that as judged of by Sense. Eternal Love engaged by Covenant to make us happy, will do nothing but what we shall find at last, will terminate in that blessed End. He envied you not your Son, as too good for you, or too great a Mercy, who hath given you his own Son, and with him the Mercy of Eternal Life. Corporal Sufferings with Spiritual Blessings, are the ordinary Lot of Believers here on Earth ; As Corporal Prosperity with Spiritual Calamity is the Lot of the Ungodly. And I beseech you consider, that God knoweth better than you or I, what an Ocean your Son was ready to launch out into, and how tempestuous and terrible it might have proved, and whether the World that he is saved from, would have afforded him more of Safety or Seduction, of Comfort or Calamity ? Whether the Protraction of the Life of your Noble Husband, to have seen our Sins and their Effects and Consequents, would have afforded him greater Joy or Sorrow ? Undoubtedly as God had a better Title to your Husband, and Children, and Friends than you had, so it is much better to be with him, than to be with you, or with the best or greatest upon Earth. The heavenly Inhabitants fear not our Fears, and feel not our Afflictions. They are past our Dangers, and out of the Reach of all our Enemies, and delivered from our Pains and Cares, and have the full Possession of all those Mercies which we pray and labour for. Can you think your Children and Friends that are with Christ, are not safer and better than those that yet remain with you ? Do you think that Earth is better than Heaven for you your self ? I take it for granted you cannot think so, and will not say so : And if it be worse for you, it's worse for them. The Providence which by hastening their Glorification,

fication, doth promote your Sanctification ; which
 helpeth them to the *End*, and helpeth you in the *Way*,
 must needs be good to them and you, however it ap-
 pear to Flesh and Unbelief. O Madam, when our
 Lord hath shewed us (as he will shortly do) what a
 state it is to which he bringeth the Spirits of the Just,
 and how he doth there entertain and use them, we
 shall then be more competent Judges of all those Acts
 of Providence, to which we are now so hardly re-
 conciled ! Then we shall censure our Censurings of
 these Works of God, and be offended with our
 Offences at them, and *call our selves* blind unthankful
 sinners, for *calling them* so bad as we did in our mis-
 judging Unbelief and Passion. We shall not wish our
 selves or Friends again on Earth, among Temptati-
 ons and Pains, and among uncharitable Men, malici-
 ous Enemies, deceitful Flatterers, and untrusty
 friends ! When we see that Face which we now long
 to see, and know the Things which we long to know,
 and feel the Love which we long to feel, and are full
 of the Joys which now we can scarce attain a Taste of,
 and have reach'd the End which now we seek, and for
 which we suffer, we shall no more take it for a Judg-
 ment to be taken from Ungodly Men, and from a
 World of Sin, and Fear and Sorrow ; nor shall we
 envy the wicked, nor ever desire to be Partakers of
 their Pleasures. 'Till then, let us congratulate our
 departed Friends, the Felicity which they have attain-
 ed, and which we desire ; and let us rejoyce with them
 that rejoyce with Christ, and let us prefer the least be-
 lieving Thought of the everlasting Joys, before all the
 defiled transitory Pleasures of the deluded, dreaming,
 miserable World. And let us prefer such Converse as
 we can here attain, with God in Christ, and with the
 Heavenly Society, before all the Pomp and Friendship
 of the World. We have no Friend that is so able to
 supply

supply all our Wants, so sufficient to content us, ready to relieve us, so willing to entertain us, so wearied in hearing us, and conversing with us, as our blessed Lord. This is a Friend that will never prove untrusty, nor be changed by any Change of Interest, Opinion or Fortune ; nor give us cause to suspect his Love : A Friend that we are sure will not forsake us, nor turn our Enemy, nor abuse us for his own Advantage, nor will ever die or be separated from us, but we shall be always with him, and see his Glory, and be filled and transported with his Love, and sing his Praise to all Eternity. With whom then should we so delightfully converse on Earth ? And 'till we can reach that sweet delightful Converse, whom should we seek with more Ambition, or observe with greater Devotedness and Respect ? O that we were less Carnal, and more Spiritual, and lived less by Sense, and more by Faith ; that we knew better the Difference between God and Man, between visible Temporals, and invisible Eternals ! We should then have other Thoughts, and Desires, and Resolutions, and Converse, and Employments and Pleasures than too many have !

Madam, it displeaseth me that it is no more elaborate a Treatise, to which the present Opportunity inviteth me to prefix your Name ; but your own Desire of the Third Part must be my Excuse for all : But pardon the *Manner*, and I dare commend the *Matter* to you, as more worthy your serious Contemplation and your daily most delightful Practice, than any other that was ever proposed unto mortal Man. This is the Man-like Noble Life : The Life which the rational Soul was made for : To which if our Faculties be not by sanctifying Grace restored, they fall below their proper Dignity and Use, and are worse than lost ; like a Prince or learned Man, that is employed

y in sweeping Dog-kennels, or tending Swine. *To*
walk in Holiness with the most Holy God, is the Improve-
 ment and Advancement of the Nature of Man, to-
 wards its designed Equality with Angels: When
 Earthliness and Sensuality degrade Humanity into (a
 voluntary, and therefore sinful) Brutishness: This is
 the Life which affordeth the Soul a solid and durable
 Treasure and Content: When carnal Minds evaporate
 into Air, and bubble into Froth and Vanity, wasted
 in a Dream, and the violent busie Pursuit of a Shadow;
 receiving themselves with a Mixture of some counter-
 feited Religion; playing with God, and working for
 the World; living in Jest, and dying, and despairing,
 offering in Earnest; with unwearied Labour
 upon the Sand, and sinking at Death for want
 of Foundation; having the serious Practice of their
 Religion, because it is not the Profession,
 but the serious Practice which hath the greatest Enmi-
 ty to their sensual Delights; yet wishing to be num-
 bered with those hereafter, whom they hated here:
This Holy Walking with the most Holy God, is the only
 Life which is best at last, and sweet in the Review,
 which the Godly live in, and most of the Ungodly
 would wish to dye in; like him that wished to be *Cæsar*
 in Life, and *Socrates* at Death: Yea, this is the Life
 which hath no End; which we are *here* but *learning*,
 and beginning to Practice, and which we must here-
 after live (in another *manner* and *degree*) with God for
 ever: O wondrous Mercy! which thus enobleth even
 the State of Mortality! and honoureth *Earth* with
 so much Participation of, and Communion with Hea-
 ven! That *by God*, and *with God*, we may walk in ho-
 ly Peace and Safety *unto God*, and there be blessed in
 his perfect *Sight* and *Love* for ever! Madam, the
 greatest Service I can do you for all your Favours,
 is, to pray that God will more acquaint you with
 himself,

himself, and lead you by this blessed Way to that more blessed End; that when you see all wordly Glory in the Dust, you may bless him for ever, who taught you to make a wiser Choice: Which are the Prayers of

M A D A M,

Your very much obliged Servant,

Dec. 24,
1663.

RICHARD BAXTER.

N. B. The foregoing Epistle (which was by the late Reverend and Pious Mr. Baxter, to comfort a religious Lady undergoing Losses, of many near and holy Friends, having afforded me a great deal of Satisfaction and Pleasure in the Perusal, I was willing that others should share with me herein; and have therefore reprinted by its self in order to distribute it gratis, for the Comfort of all pious People of whatever Perswasion, who may hereafter meet with Afflictions and Sorrows, either by the Loss of Friends or other Disappointments: Nor is it by any means intended to encourage irreligious and unholy Persons, or move them to Presumption, who have no Title to the Mercies of God, as this religious Lady may be supposed to have had. That it may answer the good Design, is the Prayer of

The Publisher,